

Cicero,
De haruspicum responsis

Introduction, Text, Translation, and Commentary

ANTHONY CORBEILL

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Translation

Speech of Marcus Tullius Cicero on the Responses of the *Haruspices*, Delivered in the Senate against Publius Clodius

1 Yesterday, senators, greatly inspired not only by your own eminence but by the presence of the many Roman knights who had received permission to attend the senate, I decided that I had to check the unchaste scurrility of Publius Clodius. He kept disrupting with the most inane questions the debate over tax collection, devoting himself to the cause of Publius Tullius Nisyrus and selling his favors, even while all of you were watching, to this man who had already bought him wholesale. So I checked him in the midst of his riotous madness by threatening to take him to court: with barely two words begun I entirely shut down the gladiator's vicious attack. 2 But even so, unaware of who this year's consuls were, pale and seething, he suddenly burst out of the senate house, taking with him some of those now ineffectual threats and fearmongering from the Pisogabinian age. As I began to follow him out, I felt a great deal of satisfaction because not only did all of you rise up, but the tax-collectors joined us as well. Suddenly the lunatic stopped—with a blank expression, pale and silent. He then looked behind him and, once he spotted the consul Gnaeus Lentulus, collapsed nearly at the threshold of the senate house—remembering with longing, I imagine, his dear Gabinus and Piso.

What can I say about his unbridled, headlong madness? Do you think I have the power to wound him with words more authoritative than those of that ultimate authority, Publius Servilius, who straightaway cut him down and snuffed him out? Even if I were now able to rival that man's singularly forceful, almost divine, authority, I still don't doubt that the weapons cast by a personal enemy would be more ineffectual and blunt than those hurled by his father's colleague.

3 All the same, I want to explain the reason for my own behavior to those who thought that I had been carried away by grievous indignation yesterday to an extent almost greater than the disciplined reason of a wise man should have desired. There was nothing that I did in anger, nothing in a reckless temper, nothing that I had not pondered at length and been planning long before. For you see, senators, I have always expressed my opposition to two men in particular. When they should have been defending—and could have been saving—me and the republic, and when they were being called upon to do their duty as consuls through the very insignia of that office and to protect me in response to both your authority and pleading, their first act was to abandon us, then betray us, and finally attack us. Enjoying the rewards of a wicked alliance, they wanted me, along with the republic, utterly overwhelmed and destroyed.

And the sufferings that their powerful leadership, bloody and deadly as it was, could neither keep from the walls of our allies nor bring upon enemy cities—we're talking about creating a desert through demolition, fires, rampage, and general destruction—they have instead, along with their looting, inflicted on my entire property. 4 I declare that it is against these torch-wielding Furies—no, against these dreaded prodigies, a virtual plague on this country—that I have been waging an inexpiable war. And I am required to do this not so much because of my own indignation and that of my family as because of your own and that of our fellow elite. As for Clodius, my odium toward him today is no greater than it was on that notorious day when I learned that, wearing women's clothes and scorched by sacred flames, he was thrown out of a sacrilegious orgy at the home of the *pontifex maximus*. It was precisely then that I foresaw well in advance the great storm that was rising up and the hurricane winds that would be threatening the state. I understood that such a wildly criminal act of boldness, perpetrated by a crazed, fickle, and damaged young man, could not be kept within peaceful limits. I saw that that evil, if it had remained unpunished, would eventually burst forth to destroy the state.

5 Afterward hatred, at least on my part, did not increase much, since he opposed me not because he hated me, but because he hated anything serious or honorable; he hated the state. And he did no more violence to me than to the senate, to the Roman knights, to all right-thinking men, and to the whole of Italy. Most of all, he was no more wicked to me than to the very immortal gods, since he violated them with such a crime as no one has committed before. He felt the same way toward me as his friend Catiline would have if he had come out on top. As a result, I didn't think that I ever had to bring charges against him any more than against that blockhead who claims to be a Ligurian (if he hadn't, we'd have no idea to what class of human beings he belongs). But why should I bring charges against Clodius? He's an animal—from the farm and from the wild—perverted by the fodder and nuts of my enemies. If he has realized the wickedness he's gotten mixed up in then I've no doubt he's the most wretched person alive. But if he doesn't see this, then there is the risk that he may plead stupidity.

6 And on top of all this, everyone expects that Clodius is destined to be sacrificed as a victim to the famously brave Titus Annius Milo. So it is very wrong that I, who recovered my dignity and well-being through his efforts, should snatch from him this praise that is vowed and long overdue. Milo is like the great Scipio, who seemed born to raze Carthage; as if sent by fate, he overturned that city by himself, after many military leaders had besieged, attacked, undermined, and at one point nearly captured it. In the same way, Milo seems born to choke, stifle, and utterly destroy that pest, as if he were given as a gift to the

republic by divine dispensation. He is the only person who recognized how necessary it was not only to defeat but even to fetter a fully armed citizen of Rome, one who was using stones and knives to put to flight some, to trap at home others, and to terrify the entire city—senate house, forum, and all the temples—with threats of carnage and conflagration. 7 I would never willingly snatch from a man such as this, a benefactor both to me and to the state, the opportunity to prosecute Clodius in court, especially since in protecting me he not only took on my enemies but he even sought them out. Yet even now, if Clodius, although ensnared in every kind of legal threat, entangled in a net of hatred toward all good citizens, and caught up in the expectation of imminent punishment, will nevertheless come forward haltingly and attempt to make an attack on me despite his being hampered, I will resist his attempt and, with Milo allowing me or even helping, I will reject it. Yesterday, for example: when he was standing there threatening me as I remained silent, I used my voice to just touch upon the onset of legal proceedings. He sank down; I fell silent. Had he set up a day in court as he had threatened, I would have encouraged that the summons from the praetor be announced no later than the second day. And yet this is how he should guide his thinking: if he is content with the crimes that he has committed, then he has already been given over to Milo; and if he aims one of his spears at me, right away I will shield myself behind the justice of the courts.

8 And so just a little while ago, senators, he held a meeting of the people, the contents of which were brought to me in full. Listen first to the gist of the meeting's argument; then, after you have laughed at this man's lack of shame, you will hear about his entire speech. Addressing the people about religious scruples, rites, and ceremonies, my fellow senators, was Clodius. That's right, *Publius* Clodius has lamented that the proper observation of ritual has been neglected, violated, and polluted. It's no surprise if you find this ridiculous. Even those in his own meeting laughed at him, a person—as he is himself accustomed to boast—pierced by two hundred decrees of the senate (each of which was made against him in defense of religious practice), and who engaged in sex on the couches of the Bona Dea. That goddess's rites, which it is sacrilegious for a man to see even by accident, he violated not only with his male gaze but with sexual violence. This is the person who in a public assembly complained about the violation of religious rites. 9 So now we await his next public meeting, on sexual purity. For is there any difference between a man who complains about religious rites after taking flight from a most sacred altar and one who, after leaving his sisters' bedroom, speaks in defense of chastity and physical purity?

He read aloud at the public meeting this recent haruspical response about a rumbling noise. Among the many other things written there is what you have already heard, that SACRED AND HALLOWED PLACES HAVE BEEN DESECRATED. In this context he claimed that my home had been made sacred by a most sanctified priest—Publius Clodius. 10 I am delighted to be given the opportunity, one not simply appropriate but even necessary, of speaking about this entire portent, which is probably the most serious to come before this body in the past several years. For you will discover that this entire prodigy and its response warns us, as if through the voice of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, about the crazed criminality of this man and about the threat of unparalleled dangers. 11 First, though, I shall free my home from any religious restrictions, if I can do so truthfully and without anyone expressing doubt. And yet if a single person feels even the tiniest bit of uneasiness, I will heed the portents and scruples of the immortal gods not just with patience but even with pleasure.

But in the end, which home in such an immense city as this stands so free and clear of any suspicion of religious restrictions? Granted that your own homes, fellow senators, and those of all other citizens are almost entirely free of religious sanction, still, in this city mine alone has been made free by every possible authority. And so I call on you, Lentulus, and you, Philippus: on account of the haruspical response before us the senate has decreed that you make a motion to this body about sacred places that are bound by religion. Do you have the power to make a motion about my home? As I have said, it is the only one in Rome that has been released from every religious sanction by every authority. To begin with: in that stormy night of the republic my own enemy touched on it with not one single letter concerning religious purity, although he had scrupulously written out all his remaining crimes with a pen made wet by Sextus Cloelius's notoriously disgusting mouth. Secondly, the Roman people, endowed with the highest authority in all things, ordered through the centuriate assembly, with votes taken from every age and class, that this same house exist with the same rights that it had always had. Finally, not because the affair was in doubt, but so that this Fury would be silenced if he should remain any longer in the city that he wanted to destroy, you senators decreed that the matter of my house's religious status be referred to the college of pontiffs. 12 What sacred obligation is so great that a verbal response of Publius Servilius alone, or of Marcus Lucullus, does not set us free despite our own doubts and extreme religious uncertainty? The decision of three pontiffs has always been deemed sacred, venerable, and scrupulous enough for the people, the senate, and the immortal gods when it concerns a matter of public rites, the most prestigious games, the rituals of the Penates and Mother Vesta, and the very ceremony that takes place on behalf of the safety of the Roman people, a ceremony that, since Rome's founding, has been violated only by the criminal action of this upright guardian of religion. But as it is, my home has been liberated from every religious liability by the unanimous decision of Publius Lentulus, consul and

pontiff, Publius Servilius, Marcus Lucullus, Quintus Metellus, Manius Glabrio, Marcus Messalla, Lucius Lentulus the flamen of Mars, Publius Galba, Quintus Metellus Scipio, Gaius Fannius, Marcus Lepidus, the *rex sacrorum* Lucius Claudius, Marcus Scaurus, Marcus Crassus, Gaius Curio, Sextus Caesar the flamen of Quirinus, as well as the lesser pontiffs Quintus Cornelius, Publius Albinovanus, and Quintus Terentius. The case was heard in two places before a huge crowd of esteemed and brilliant citizens. 13 Ever since the establishment of the city's sacred rites—whose antiquity matches that of Rome itself—I assert that the college has never passed a judgment in such numbers about any matter, not even about the capital punishment of Vestal Virgins. Whereas it is important in investigating a misdeed that there be present as many people as possible (the assessment process of *pontifices* is such that these men also have authority as judges), the elucidation of a matter of religion can be rightly made by even one *pontifex* with experience—a situation that is harsh and unfair in a capital case. Nevertheless, you will learn that a greater number of *pontifices* has rendered a decision regarding my house than they ever had done concerning the rites of the Vestals. On the next day, after the consuls Publius Lentulus and Quintus Metellus introduced the matter, you, Lentulus, our consul designate, were the first to put forward the motion to the packed senate house. Since all the *pontifices* of senatorial rank were present, and since others who held high office from the Roman people had offered many words about the college's decision and were all present to act as witness to the drafting of a document, the senate decided that my home, through a pontifical decision, was deemed to have been freed from religious taint.

14 So could this be the “sacred” place that the *haruspices* seem especially to be talking about, the only place of all private property that possesses the special status of being judged *not* to be sacred by the very ones who are in charge of sacred affairs? In any case, introduce the issue as you should, in accordance with the senatorial decree. Either the two of you will be assigned to investigate the matter, you who were the first to render a decision about my house, freeing it of all scruple, or the senators themselves will make a judgment, who have already done so at a packed meeting in which there was only one dissenter, our sacred high priest, or (and this surely will happen) it will be referred to the *pontifices*, to whose trusted authority and wisdom our ancestors have assigned the sacred rites, both public and private. What then? Can those men decide anything other than what they already have? This city has many houses, senators, and nearly all of them, I suppose, exist with an unobjectionable title; and yet it is with a title granted through private law—either hereditary, or based on authority, or based on property transfer through sale or debt. I assert that not one other home is protected by the same private title as those homes that are protected by the best laws; but it is also protected by every outstanding public title, both human and divine. 15 First off, on senatorial authorization it is

being rebuilt at public expense and, second, so many decrees of the senate protect it, closing it off against the execrable violence of this gladiator here. To begin with, the same magistrates to whom the entire state is usually entrusted during its most dire emergencies were last year assigned the task of ensuring that I could build without incurring violence; then, after he had assailed my home with stones, fire, and sword, the senate decreed that any who had acted in this way were under the jurisdiction of the law on violence that exists for those who had attacked the entire commonwealth. It's true: in response to the motion made by you, the bravest and best consuls in human memory, this same senate decreed in a full session that whoever had violated my home would be acting against the state.

16 I maintain that no public structure, monument, or temple has been the subject of as many senatorial decrees as has my house. Since the founding of this city the senate has deemed that it alone should be rebuilt from the treasury, be set free of religious taint by the *pontifices*, be defended by the magistrates, and be avenged by a panel of judges. Publius Valerius, in recognition of his distinguished service to the state, was provided a home at public expense on the Velia, whereas mine was restored on the Palatine; he was given a site, but I was given both walls and a roof; his home was such that it was protected by private law, mine defended by all magistrates at public expense. If I possessed these things either through my own actions or from anyone else, I would not declare it in your presence—I wouldn't want to seem to brag excessively. But since you granted them to me while they were being assailed by the tongue of the man whose hand had overturned them and since with your own hands you have restored them to me and my children, I am speaking not about my actions but yours, and I have no fear that this boasting that I make about your kindnesses may seem arrogant rather than grateful. 17 And yet who would not pardon me, a man who has endured immense labors for the common good, if a kind of mental anguish were sometimes to lead me to boast while refuting the slanders of evil men? In fact, just yesterday I saw someone muttering, apparently saying that he couldn't tolerate me because, when this same filthy traitor asked me to what state I belonged I answered (with both you and the Roman *equites* voicing your approval) that I belonged to the state that had been unable to continue without me. He groaned, I'm guessing. So how should I have answered? I am asking the very person who cannot tolerate me. That I am a Roman citizen? What a clever answer! Or should I have stayed silent? But then the case is closed. Can any man who is engaged in important affairs and who has envy as his companion answer the abuse of an enemy with sufficient gravity without praising himself? And yet Clodius not only responds in whatever way he can when he has been attacked; he is even happy to be prompted for a response from his friends.

18 And so, since I have provided the details for my own case, let's now consider what the *haruspices* are saying. I admit it; I have been deeply disturbed by the consequential nature of the portent, by the gravity of the response, and by

the single unanimous voice of the *haruspices*. If I may seem to some to be more involved in the study of the written word than others who are just as busy, I am in fact not the kind of person who enjoys—or makes use of at all—those writings that frighten our minds and distract them from religious considerations. To begin with, I assure you that I consider our ancestors to be the authoritative teachers of religious procedure. I regard their wisdom to have been so profound that those people are more than sufficiently wise who can—I won't say achieve their wisdom—but who can fully comprehend how great that wisdom was. They assigned the fixed and regular ceremonial rites to the *pontifices*, the authority for successfully conducting state affairs to the augurs, the ancient oracles of our destiny to the books of Apollo's prophets, and the expiation of prodigies to the learning of the Etruscans. That learning is in fact so great that, just in recent memory, they have in no uncertain terms warned us a little beforehand not only about the deadly onset of the Social War and the nearly fatal crisis of the Sullan and Cinnan era but also about that recent conspiracy to set the city aflame and destroy the state. 19 As for my second point: whenever I have had any free time, I have also discovered that learned and wise scholars have both said and left behind in writing many things about the power of the immortal gods. Although I understand that these works were brilliantly composed, they still consist of the sorts of things that our ancestors would seem to have taught them, not to have learned from them. For in the end, who is so devoid of sense that, whenever he looks to the heavens, he does not sense the existence of the gods, or believes that there arise by chance the things that have been created by a mind so awesome that scarcely anyone with any skill can trace the order and bonds of nature; or who, alternatively, although he has understood that the gods exist, does not understand that it is through their will that this great empire of ours was born, increased, and maintained? Although it is fine, senators, that we hold ourselves in high esteem, nevertheless the Hispani are more numerous, the Gauls stronger, the Carthaginians shrewder, the Greeks better in the arts, and in particular the Italians and Latins superior in the local, inherent sense of this people and land. It is instead in our outward respect toward the gods, in our internal awe, and in this one piece of wisdom—our realization that everything is guided and controlled by divine will—that we have vanquished all peoples and tribes.

20 With this in mind, so as not to say more about a matter that is hardly in doubt, pay attention, turning your minds and not just your ears to the words of the *haruspices*: SINCE A RUMBLING, ACCOMPANIED BY A TREMBLING, WAS HEARD IN THE *AGER LATINIENSIS*. I dismiss the *haruspices*, I dismiss that ancient learning transmitted to Etruria by, as people say, the immortal gods themselves. Surely can't we ourselves be *haruspices*? In a nearby district outside the city was heard some sort of mysterious rumbling and a frightful trembling of weapons. The poets say that giants waged war with the immortal

gods—which of those giants is so irreverent as not to admit that, through this strange and awesome disturbance, the gods are prophetically pointing to something momentous for the Roman people? It has been pronounced about this event that REPARATIONS ARE OWED TO JUPITER, SATURN, NEPTUNE, TELLUS, THE HEAVENLY GODS. 21 I can hear which gods are due expiatory rites for being violated, but I ask what human faults are the cause. THAT GAMES HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED LESS CAREFULLY AND POLLUTED. Which games? I call on you, Lentulus—your priesthood controls the sacred wagons, chariot racing, musical preludes, games, and the libations and feasting proper to the games—and I call on you, *pontifices*, since the priests in charge of the banquets for Jupiter Optimus Maximus report to you when there has been an error of omission or commission, and it is you who decide whether those events are to be repeated and celebrated anew: what are the games that have been “conducted less carefully,” and when or because of what fault have they been “polluted”? You will respond on behalf of yourself and your colleagues, as well as the college of *pontifices*, that nothing has been slighted by anyone’s negligence or polluted by anyone’s fault and that, with eyes watchful for everything, all the traditional components of the games were preserved with the greatest attention to ceremony.

22 What then are the games that the *haruspices* say “have been conducted less carefully and polluted”? The ones at which the immortal gods, and in particular the Idaean mother goddess, wanted you, Gnaeus Lentulus, to be in the audience, since it was at the hands of your ancestor that she had been received in Rome. But if on that day you had not wanted to be a spectator at the Megalesian games, we would probably not be allowed to live, and to complain now about what happened. For an excited mass of countless slaves, gathered from every neighborhood by our holy aedile here and emerging at a prearranged signal, suddenly burst onto the stage from every arch and doorway. At that point you, Gnaeus Lentulus, displayed the same virtue as your great-grandfather once had when he was a private citizen. The senate and Roman *equites* and all good men rose up and followed you—your authority and power, your voice and look, your energetic attack—when that man had given over to a mob of jeering slaves the senate and Roman people as they sat cramped in their seats, checked by the audience, and fettered by the tightness of the crowd.

23 Now, if a dancer has stood still, or a flute-player suddenly gone silent, or a boy whose mother and father are still alive has failed to hold onto the sacred wagon and dropped the reins, or if the aedile has erred in prayer or in libation, then the games have not been performed properly. These errors are expiated and the minds of the immortal gods are appeased by a re-performance of the games. But if the games have passed from joy to fear, if they have been not interrupted but utterly destroyed, if for the entire citizenry those days turned out not fun but almost funereal because of the criminal behavior of the person who wanted to bring the games to grimness,

then will we doubt what are the games that this earthly rumbling proclaims to be polluted? 24 And if we wish to recall what has been passed down to us concerning each particular deity, we have heard that the Mater Magna here, the violation and pollution of whose games nearly led to the death and destruction of the state, that this Mater Magna has been roaming through our fields and groves with a kind of rumbling and trembling. Consequently she has not only revealed both to you and to the Roman people the evidence for criminality, but she has also made clear the premonitions of danger. Now what should I say about those games? Our ancestors intended to establish their celebration at the Megalesia, in front of her temple on the Palatine—in the very sight of the Mater Magna. By custom and practice they are thoroughly chaste, regular, and reverent. At these games, when consul for the second time, did Publius Africanus the Elder first give the senate a seating section in front of the people so that the impure pestilence of Clodius could pollute the games? If any free citizen had arrived there either to watch or because of a religious obligation, then hands were laid upon him. No Roman matron approached there due to the violent slaves sitting everywhere. And so those games, whose holiness was such that it settled in this city after being summoned from the ends of the earth—the only games not even given a Latin name so that by their very designation it would be clear that this worship had been both sought from a foreign source and undertaken in the name of the Mater Magna—these games were conducted by slaves, watched by slaves—in short, the entire Megalesia consisted of slaves when this man was aedile.

25 Oh immortal gods! Could you speak with us more clearly if you were present here among us? You have given signals, and now are saying clearly, that the games have been polluted. What can be uttered more stained and misshapen, perverted and completely disturbed, than that the entire slave population, set free by a magistrate's authority, was sent into one section of the theater and put in charge of a second, so that one part of the audience might be subjected to the power of slaves, while the other consisted entirely of slaves? If a swarm of bees had come onto the stage or into the stands during the games, we would think that the *haruspices* had to be summoned from Etruria. But we do see, all of us, that great swarms of slaves were suddenly set upon the Roman people, who were hemmed in and surrounded—and we are not moved? As a matter of fact, in the hypothetical case of a swarm of bees the *haruspices* would consult the texts of the Etruscans and warn us to watch out for the slave population. 26 So shall we not be thoroughly afraid when that very thing which we would watch out for when signified by some unconnected and separate warning is in fact a warning of itself, and when danger resides in the very thing from which danger is predicted? Is this the type of Megalesian festival that your father organized, or your paternal uncle? I understand that this man mentions even his ancestry, although in exhibiting his games he preferred to follow the example of Athenion and Spartacus rather than that of Gaius and Appius Claudius. When those men had their games, they ordered slaves to leave the seating area; but you sent slaves into one area and kicked free men out of the other. As a result, those who

in the past were separated from free men at the cry of the herald, at your games were setting free men apart from themselves not with their voice but by force. Did it not even occur to you, as a priest of the Sibyl, that our ancestors sought out these sacred rites from the books of your priesthood? If in fact they do belong to you, when you gather them with impious intention, read them with blinded eyes, and handle them with contaminated hands. 27 It was this Sibyl who once persuaded our ancestors to bring those sacred rites from Phrygia to Rome when Italy had been worn down by the Punic Wars and harassed by Hannibal. The man who was judged the best among the Romans—Publius Scipio—received them, along with the married woman believed to be most chaste, Quinta Claudia, whose time-honored austerity your sister is considered to have done a wonderful job of imitating. This being the case, did neither your ancestors, who were involved with these rituals, nor your own priesthood, through which this entire cult was established, nor the curule aedileship, which normally takes the greatest care for this cult—did none of these things prevent you from polluting these purest games with every disgrace, staining them with every dishonor, and encumbering them with every wickedness?

28 But why am I surprised at this? You are the person who took a bribe to destroy Pessinus, the original seat of the Mother of the gods, and to sell the entire place, including the sanctuary, to the Galatian Brogitarus, a wickedly impure man whose ambassadors used to distribute money to your gangs in the temple of Castor while you were tribune. You dragged the priest from the very altar and sacred couches, overturning everything that men of old and the Persians and the Syrians and all the kings of Europe and Asia have always worshipped with the greatest scruples. In short, these are the items that our ancestors considered so sacred that even though Rome and Italy were crammed with shrines our generals still made vows to this goddess in the midst of their greatest and fiercest wars, making them in Pessinus itself at her principal altar, at the very site of her shrine. 29 Deiotarus protected this place with the utmost purity in accordance with his own scruples, a man we consider the single most loyal person in the world to our rule and the most devoted to our reputation. But as I said earlier, you handed it over to Brogitarus, assigned it to him for a price. And despite all this it is Deiotarus—although often deemed worthy by the senate of the title “king” and glorified by the testimony of our most glorious generals—that you decide must share also this title “king” with Brogitarus. But the one is in fact a king through us, by judgment of the senate, while the other, Brogitarus, is called a king through you, because of a bribe. *** This other one I’ll consider a king if he has had the means to pay you what you loaned him through a bond. For while Deiotarus has many kingly characteristics, these are the worthiest: that he has never given you a penny; that he did not reject that part of your legislation that corresponded with the judgment of the senate, namely, that he should be king; that he recovered Pessinus in order to preserve its former sanctity after it had been violated by you through crime and deprived

of its priest and holy objects; that he does not allow the rites that have been welcomed by all the ancients to be polluted by Brogitarus, preferring that his son-in-law be without your gift rather than that that shrine be without its ancient sanctity. But to get back to these responses of the *haruspices*, the first of which concerns the games: who would not admit that the prediction and response were entirely directed toward *his* games?

30 Next comes the part about “sacred” and “hallowed” places. What unbelievable impudence! You dare mention my home? Entrust a decision about your own to the consuls, or to the senate, or to the college of *pontifices*. Although mine has been acquitted, as I said before, by all three decision-making bodies, I contend that there was a shrine, as well as altars, in the house that you own after having Quintus Seius, a Roman *eques* and a fine man, openly murdered. I will confirm and elaborate on this by citing the records of the censors and appealing to the memory of many. Provided that we attend to this affair—which has to be referred to us in accordance with the recent senatorial decree—I have things that I would like to say about hallowed places. 31 After I have spoken about your house—where a shrine has been built over in such a way that someone else has been doing the overbuilding, and you only have to destroy it—then I will consider whether I should also say something about others. For some consider it my responsibility to render accessible the *magmentarium* of Tellus. They say that it recently lay open, and I do recall this. Now they are saying that the most sacred part, the seat of the greatest religious sanctity, is contained within the forecourt of a private home. Many things concern me: that I am the caretaker of the temple of Tellus; that the person who removed that *magmentarium* said, after my house had been acquitted by the decision of the *pontifices*, that the judgment had been made in favor of his brother. The cult of Tellus also concerns me during this period of expensive grain, sterile fields, and scarcity of crops, all the more so because this same prodigy tells us that reparations are owed to Tellus.

32 Maybe I’m talking about things that are out of date. In fact, if it hasn’t been written explicitly in civil law, it has nonetheless been consecrated by the law of nature, by the shared law of peoples, that mortals cannot acquire anything from the immortal gods through uninterrupted possession. But still, we are neglecting events of the past; shall we also neglect those things that we see are happening at this very moment? Take Lucius Piso: who is unaware that in our own time he destroyed a most important and sacred shrine of Diana on the Caelian? Neighbors of that spot are present here; there are even many in this senatorial order who have conducted in that very chapel, at the appointed place, the annual rites for their families. And are we investigating what places the immortal gods are expressing longing for, what they mean and what they are talking

about? Are we ignorant that Sextus Serranus has undermined, built over, and blocked access to very sacred shrines, ultimately defiling them with the greatest disgrace? 33 As for you: were you able to make my house a site of religious pollution? With what mind? The one you had lost. With what hand? The one with which you had demolished it. With what voice? The one with which you had ordered it burned. Through what law? The one you hadn't even written during that time when you would have been unpunished for doing so. With what sacred couch? The one you had debauched. With what image? The one you had stolen from the tomb of a whore and erected in the monument of a general. What religious pollution does my house have other than that it shares a party wall with someone impure and sacrilegious? And so, in order that none of my family may be able to glimpse inside your house unknowingly and see you going through your own rites, I will raise my roof higher—not that I may look down upon you but so that you may not look out on the city that you wanted to destroy.

34 So now let's consider the remaining responses of the *haruspices*: *ORATORES HAVE BEEN KILLED CONTRARY TO HUMAN AND DIVINE LAW*. What does this mean? I see that people are talking about the Alexandrians. I am not going to refute this, since I understand that the rights of embassies have been not only fortified by the safeguards of human beings but also protected by the ramparts of divine law. Still, I have a question for the person who, while tribune, released from prison into the forum all his spies, and at whose whim these men wield all sorts of daggers and every poison, and who signed promissory notes with Hermarchus of Chios: is he aware that Theodosius, a very bitter enemy of Hermarchus, was struck down by a dagger after being sent to the senate as an ambassador from a free state? I know for a fact that this seemed to the immortal gods no less unworthy than the business about the Alexandrians.

35 And yet I am not now attributing everything to you alone. There would surely be a greater sense of security if you were the only unsavory character, but there are several. For this reason not only do you have more confidence in yourself but we are almost justified in our lack of it. Everyone knows that in Thessalonica there came to our “imperator” (that's how he styled himself) a legate from Orestis, a free part of Macedon—Plator, a well-known and noble man in those parts. That man threw Plator in chains because he was unable to extort money from him. He then sent in his own doctor to sever in a most cruel and foul fashion the veins of an ambassador, an ally, a friend, a freeborn man. He didn't want his axes bloodied from this crime but in fact he stained the reputation of the Roman people with a crime so great that nothing except his own punishment could expiate it. What sort of assassins do we think this man has when he employs even his own doctors not to cure but to kill?

36 But let me read out what comes next: *CREDIBILITY AND OATH-TAKING HAVE BEEN NEGLECTED*. It isn't easy for me to explain what this means by itself, but from what follows I imagine that it is about the open perjury of your

jurors, who at one time would have had their money stolen back if they hadn't demanded from the senate a bodyguard. Here is the reason why I imagine it is about these men: because I am convinced both that that was the single most notorious and distinctive case of perjury in this state and that, in spite of this, no charge was brought against you by your fellow conspirators.

37 And I see that the following has been appended to the haruspical response: ANCIENT AND SECRET RITES HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED LESS CAREFULLY AND POLLUTED. Are the *haruspices* saying this or are the gods of our city and homes? Sure, I'd imagine that there are many people upon whom suspicion may fall for this kind of offense—who other than this one man here? Are these words obscure about what rites have been polluted? What can be uttered with more clarity, with more consideration for religion, with more gravity? ANCIENT AND SECRET. I assert that Lentulus, a serious and skilled speaker, used no words more often when he prosecuted you than these which are spoken now, interpreted and redirected from the Etruscan books against you. For what rite is so ancient as this one, inherited from the kings as coeval with this city? And which rite is as secret as the one that excludes not only inquisitive eyes but even wandering eyes, where not only impudence but even imprudence cannot enter? Until Publius Clodius, no one in human memory has violated this rite, no one has ever approached it, no one (who is male) has not dreaded to look upon it. It is conducted through the Vestal Virgins, on behalf of the Roman people, in a house that has magisterial authority, with unbelievable ceremony, and for that goddess whose name it is sacrilege for men even to know. That man says that this goddess is “good” because she forgave him such a horrid crime. No; she didn't forgive, believe me. Or maybe you think you've been forgiven because the jurors set you loose, emptied out and drained dry, innocent by their own verdict but guilty by everyone else's? Or is it because you didn't lose your eyes, as is the general belief regarding that cult?

38 For what man before you had knowingly witnessed those rites, with the result that someone could know the punishment attendant upon that crime? Would blindness in your eyes hinder you more than blindness in your passions? You don't even realize that you should have chosen those dull eyes of your great-great-grandfather over the passionate eyes of your sister. In fact, if you pay attention carefully you will understand that up until this point you have avoided punishment from human beings but not from the gods. People have defended you in the ugliest affair; people have praised you, though disgusting and utterly guilty; people have freed you in court when you had practically confessed; people were not aggrieved at the injustice of your libidinous activity even against themselves; some people provided you with weapons against me, later others did so against our unconquerable fellow citizen; from people, I fully admit, you should not seek greater favors.

39 But what of the immortal gods? What greater punishment can they give a person than raging madness? Unless perhaps you think that the characters in tragedy that you see tortured and consumed by wounds and physical pain experience worse anger from the immortal gods than those who are led onstage raging mad. Those familiar shrieks and groans of Philoctetes, bitter as they are, are not so wretched as the raving of Athamas and the dark moods of the matricides. As for you, whenever you utter crazed words at public assemblies, overturn the homes of citizens, drive from the forum with stones our finest men, toss burning torches onto the roofs of your neighbors, set aflame sacred temples, stir up slaves, disrupt rites and games, cannot tell your wife from your sister, are unaware what bedroom you are entering—that's when you rave like one possessed, exhibit fury, and pay the only penalty that the immortal gods have established for human wickedness. The frailty of our body experiences many misfortunes on its own. In fact, the body is itself done in from the slenderest cause; but "the spears of the gods are fixed in the minds of the impious." For this reason, whenever you are cast into every sort of crime because of your eyes you are more wretched than if you had no eyes at all.

40 Since we have spoken enough about all the things that the *haruspices* say have been perpetrated, let's consider what these same *haruspices* say is now being warned by the immortal gods. They warn THAT THROUGH DISCORD AND DISAGREEMENT OF THE BEST MEN THERE NOT ARISE DEATH AND DANGER FOR THE FATHERS AND LEADING MEN, AND THAT THEY NOT BE WITHOUT HELP FROM A DIVINE SOURCE, † BECAUSE OF WHICH CIRCUMSTANCE WEALTH WOULD REVERT TO A SINGLE RULER AND THERE WOULD OCCUR THE DRIVING AWAY OF THE ARMY AND DESPOTISM †. These are all the words of the *haruspices*; I add nothing of my own. So who is contriving this discord among the best men? That same man: and not by virtue of his genius or planning, but because of a mistake on our part, a mistake that he recognized easily since it was not hidden. For the state is endangered all the worse because it is being stirred up not even by such a person that may lend the appearance of its falling honorably, like a brave man in battle after receiving direct wounds from a brave opponent.

41 Tiberius Gracchus uprooted the state constitution—a man of such seriousness, eloquence, and reputation! He would not have strayed from the remarkably distinguished virtue of his father and of Africanus his grandfather, were it not for the fact that he had turned away from the senate. He was followed by Gaius Gracchus—what natural talent and eloquence, such force and seriousness in speech! As a result, good men grieved that these outstanding qualities were not directed toward better purposes and intentions. Lucius Saturninus, for his part, was so unrestrained—almost mad—that he was an exceptional public speaker, perfect for rousing to extremes the passions of the naive. And what can I say about Publius Sulpicius? The seriousness, agreeability, and richness of his oratory was so great that by speaking he could cause the prudent

to err, or the honorable to think less honorably. The struggles with these men and the daily battles on behalf of our country's welfare was immensely troublesome to those who governed the state at the time. But it was nonetheless the kind of trouble that entailed a certain dignity.

42 But this person here, about whom I now have so much to say—by the immortal gods! what sort of thing is he, what power does he have, what force is he applying so that our great state, should it fall—and may the gods avert this omen!—would at least seem to have been destroyed by a real man? After his father's death he offered up the notorious beginnings of his tender youth to the lusts of wealthy flâneurs. When their intemperate desires were sated he played around at home having sex with siblings. Once he was fully grown he gave himself over to military affairs in the provinces and while there endured abuse from pirates, satiating even the lusts of Cilician barbarians. Then, after stirring up Lucius Lucullus's troops through an unspeakable crime, he took flight and, freshly arrived in Rome, he came to an agreement with his relatives not to prosecute them and took money from Catiline to collude in a disgraceful acquittal. From there he departed for Gaul with Murena, where he wrote the wills of those already dead, murdered young heirs, and forged with many people wickedly criminal pacts and alliances. Upon his return he redirected entirely to himself such an eminently rich and fertile profit from the electoral field that this "popular" politician ended up most wickedly defrauding the people, and this same gentle man most cruelly executed in his own home the paymasters of all the tribes.

43 Then it happened: the quaestorship deadly to the state, to its sacred rites and religious scruples, to your authority, and to the public courts. During that time this same man violated gods and men, shame and chastity, senatorial authority, human and divine justice, the laws and courts. This was his first entrée—oh these are wretched times and our disagreements are stupid!—this was Publius Clodius's first entrée into the republic, his first upward ascent toward the flaunting of his popular credentials. Tiberius Gracchus, since he was present at the crafting of an invidious treaty with the Numantines while quaestor to the consul Gaius Mancinus, suffered distress and fear on account of the senate's stern disapproval of that treaty. It was this affair that drove such a brave and renowned man to turn away from the severity of his father. Gaius Gracchus was roused by loyalty and grief at his brother's death, as well as by a noble spirit, to seek vengeance for bloodshed within his family. As for Saturninus, we know that it was grief that made him a popular politician since, during a period of high prices, the senate removed him while quaestor from the administration of grain and put Marcus Scaurus in charge. The winds of popularity carried away Sulpicius further than he had intended when, starting with the best intentions, he resisted Gaius Julius's illegal pursuit of the consulship.

44 Each of these men had a cause; while it was not just—since no one can have just cause for behaving badly toward the state—nevertheless it was serious, and bound up with the grief of a manly spirit. Publius Clodius? Changing from a saffron robe, a headdress, women's slippers and purple veils, a breastband, a lute, his disgraceful sexual behavior, he suddenly became a popular politician. If women had not caught him dressed up in this way, and if maidservants had not helped send him out of a place that it was sacrilege to enter, the Roman people would now be deprived of a man of the people, the republic of so distinguished a citizen.

During our own disagreements, which the immortal gods warn us about through these recent prodigies, it was his insane behavior that allowed him to be the only man snatched from the ranks of the patricians, one who could not lawfully become a tribune of the people. 45 A year earlier his cousin Metellus and the senate—still then in agreement—had dismissed and unanimously resisted most keenly this action, with Gnaeus Pompey being the first to state his opinion. But after a division among the elite, the very one about which we are now being warned, there was so much turmoil and disarray that the very thing that his relative the consul had refused to let happen, that his brilliant relation and comrade (who had not praised him when on trial) had blocked, was now being put into effect amidst the discord of the leaders by that consul who ought to have been his single greatest enemy but claimed that he had acted at the instigation of someone whose authority no one could possibly regret. A torch was cast, foul and sorrowful for the republic. An assault was made on your authority, on the stability of the upper classes, on the agreement of all good men, in short on the state's entire constitution. For all these things were surely under assault when there was hurled against me, their defender, the firebrand of those times. I was the only person to intercept it, and to be set ablaze for my country. Although surrounded by these same fires, you nevertheless looked on as I, the first to be struck down, went up in smoke on your behalf.

46 Discord did not abate; instead, hatred grew even stronger among those who were thought to be defending me. Then look what happened: these same men restored me from exile, with Pompey leading the way, who used not only his authority but even personal entreaties to rouse up for my salvation an Italy that wanted me, you who demanded me, and the Roman populace who longed for me. May there be an end at last to discord, may we find rest from our long-standing disagreements. But this very same instrument of ruin here prevents it, holding public assemblies and stirring up confusion in such a way that he offers himself for sale to different people at different times; and yet he does not do this so that each person may believe himself worthy of praise if he has been praised by Clodius but so that they may take delight when he attacks people that they don't like. Still, I'm not surprised by him—what else could he do?—but I am surprised by those men who are very wise and serious: first, because without compunction they allow any well-known person, even a great benefactor to the state, to be attacked by the words of this disgusting creature; next, that they consider that someone's fame and stature can be harmed by the slander of a ruined and dissolute person, an opinion that hardly benefits them; and, finally,

because they do not consider (although I believe they have suspicions) that his insanely fickle attacks could be turned back upon themselves. 47 And so, as a result of this wholesale alienation of not a few people from certain individuals, there now clings to the republic the weapons that I bore with great difficulty, but a little more easily so long as they clung only to me. What about this man? If from the first he hadn't given himself over to those who he thought had been hostile to your leadership, if this renowned authority were not praising them to high heaven, if he weren't threatening to send Gaius Caesar's army—he was mistaken here, but no one contradicted him—to send Caesar's army, I say, into the senate house ready for battle, if he were not proclaiming that he was doing what he did with the help of Pompey and at the instigation of Crassus, if he weren't asserting that the consuls had made common cause with him—the only instance where he wasn't lying—could he have been such a cruel tormentor of me, and such a wicked one of the republic? 48 But after he saw that you were recovering your breath from the fear of slaughter, that your authority was resurfacing from the billows of servitude, and that the yearning memory of me was coming back to life, this same man suddenly began to offer himself for sale to you with the greatest deception and then to say, both here and in public assemblies, that the laws of Julius Caesar had been passed contrary to the auspices, including that law passed by the curiate assembly which held in place his entire tribunate, a fact that he failed to recognize in his blind insanity. He used to bring forward the extraordinarily brave Marcus Bibulus and ask him whether he had continuously observed the auspices when Caesar was passing his legislation. He replied that he had. He used to ask the augurs whether anything that had been passed in such a fashion had been passed properly. They would say that such passage was faulty. Some good men who were my benefactors used to hold this man very dear, but I believe they were unaware of his raging madness.

He went further: he began to attack Gnaeus Pompey, whom he used to brag was the promoter of his own plans. This won him the approval of many. 49 It was then that he was swept away by the hope that, since he had disgraced with a wicked crime the man who had quelled civil war while still wearing a toga, he could also ruin that hero who had conquered our enemies in foreign wars; it was then that an accursed dagger, nearly fatal to our empire, was seized in the temple of Castor; it was then that that hero, to whom no enemy city was ever shut for long and who without fail used his strength and courage to break through every mountain pass and through every high city wall placed in his path, was besieged in his own home. His plan of action freed me from many of the charges of cowardice that I had received from the naive. Because for as long as that man was tribune of the plebs, if Gnaeus Pompey, the bravest man who ever lived, was more aggrieved than disgraced that he could not gaze at the light of day, that he kept out of the public eye, that he endured the threats of Clodius when he proclaimed in public assemblies his desire to build a second portico in the Carinae district that would face the Palatine,—then surely the fact that I left my own home was lamentable in respect to my private grief, but glorious when taking into account the republic.

50 And so you see that this man, lying low for a long time now from a self-inflicted wound, is being roused up by deadly discord among the optimates. The early stages of his madness were nurtured by disagreements with men who at the time seemed to have been estranged from you. The detractors and enemies of these men defended what was left of his tribunate when it was already in decline—and even afterward. They stood in the way of this pest of the republic being removed from the republic, of his pleading his case in court, even of his being a private citizen. Were some of our best citizens even able to hold that venomous and plague-bearing viper in their embrace and among their favorites? In the end, what gift lured them? They say: “I want there to be someone who can take down Pompey at a public assembly.” Take him down through verbal attacks? I would like for this most important man, one to whom I am most grateful for my well-being, to hear what I have to say; I will certainly say what I think. I solemnly swear that I thought he was diminishing Pompey’s magnificent importance at that time when he was extolling him with the highest praise. 51 Tell me, was Gaius Marius more resplendent when being praised by Gaius Glaucia or when he was later angrily abused by him? Or was that madman, already going headlong to punishment and destruction, more foul or defiled while accusing Pompey than while attacking the entire senate? This is the very thing that I marvel at, namely that while they are pleased with the former action when they are angry, the latter is not unpleasant to such loyal citizens. But don’t let this delight our best citizens any longer: just let them read this contional speech of his that I am talking about. In it he glorifies Pompey—or does he defame him? Surely he praises him, saying that there is one man in this state worthy of the glory of this empire, and indicating that he is himself his very close friend and has been reconciled to his favor. 52 Although I don’t know the meaning of this, I nevertheless am of this opinion: if he were Pompey’s friend he would not have praised him, because if he were his greatest enemy what more could he have done to diminish his glory? As for those who were delighted that he was Pompey’s enemy and for that reason turned a blind eye to his numerous serious crimes, even sometimes offering their own applause for his reckless, untamed madness—let them consider how swiftly he has changed. For right now he is praising Pompey but attacking those to whom he previously used to offer himself up for sale. What do you imagine he would do if he were allowed to return to Pompey’s good graces, when he is now creeping so gladly into the expectation of them?

53 What other instances of “discord among the best” should I consider the gods to be describing? This term, “the best,” describes neither Publius Clodius nor anyone from his mob of advisors. The Etruscan books have fixed words to apply to that class of citizens: “the lowly, the rejects.” You will hear about them soon; this is their word for men whose thoughts and affairs have become corrupted and far removed from the common welfare. That’s why, when the immortal gods warn about discord “among the best,” they pronounce on dis-sension among the most brilliant and meritorious citizens. When they predict danger and slaughter for the “leaders,” they keep Clodius safe. He’s as far from a leader as he is from the pure and the scrupulous. 54 They understand that it is up to you, my most brilliant and honorable fellow citizens, to plan for the protection of your well-being. The slaughter of leaders is being predicted; what is destined to follow the death of the best is appended: we are being warned not to let the state revert to the rule of one. If we weren’t being led to fear this because of the gods’ warnings, we would still be caught up in it due to our own feelings and reason. For normally there is no other outcome of discord among brilliant and powerful men than either universal destruction or a conqueror taking power and creating a kingdom. There was disagreement between Gaius Marius, a most brilliant citizen, and Lucius Sulla, a high-born, extremely powerful consul: each was defeated and fell; each then conquered and ruled like a king. Octavius quarreled with his colleague Cinna: favorable Fortune granted a kingdom to both, hostile Fortune death. Sulla conquered a second time, and there was no doubt that he had the power of a king even though he had restored the republic. 55 At the present time odium is in no way hidden; it is sown and seared deep in the minds of our most valuable citizens. Our leaders are in disagreement; opportunity is there for the taking. Those who do not have as many resources nevertheless wait for some chance opportunity, while those who are indisputably more powerful are perhaps sometimes afraid of what their enemies are planning and thinking. Just let this discord be removed from our state and soon all these fears that threaten will be extinguished. Soon that serpent, who at one time hides over here, then emerges to head off in another direction, will be caught, crushed, and die.

For these same ones warn THAT THE REPUBLIC NOT BE HARMED BY SECRET PLANS. And which are more secret than the plans of the man who dared say in a public assembly that a cessation of public business should be declared, the administration of justice interrupted, the treasury closed, and the courts adjourned? Or maybe you think that such turmoil in overturning the state could have come to his mind spontaneously, as he was cogitating on the rostra. In fact, he gorges on wine, sex, and sleep; he gorges on a crazed and unadvised recklessness. Despite all this that cessation of business was carefully cooked up and reflected upon in all-night sessions, even in meetings with co-conspirators. Remember, fellow senators, that our ears have been tested by that wicked concept and, since we are used to hearing about it, we have built a road to destruction.

56 The clause that follows reads: THAT BASER MEN, AND THOSE REJECTED, NOT RECEIVE AN INCREASE IN HONOR. Let's consider these "rejected" men since I will explain later who are the "baser" ones (although it has to be admitted that this word fits very well the man who is beyond doubt the worst of all mortals). So who then are the "rejected"? In my opinion it is not those who, through the state's fault rather than their own, have not ever attained political office, since this very thing happens frequently to many of the best citizens and most honorable men. The rejected are in fact those who stoop to anything, staging illegal gladiatorial shows and dispensing bribes out in the open, and who have been rejected not only by strangers but even by their own family, neighbors, people belonging to the same tribe, and fellow-citizens in both the city and the country. We are warned that these are the men not to receive an increase in honor. These predictions should be welcomed, and yet the Roman people have of their own accord foreseen this evil without any warning from the *haruspices*. 57 As for the "baser men," beware! There is indeed a whole tribe of them, but this man here is the chief leader of them all. For if some outstandingly talented poet were to wish to bring on stage the single worst human being, misshapen by preciously contrived vices, he would be able to discover not a single disgrace that is not present in this man, and he would skip over many that cling to him, deeply fixed.

From the first, the condition of our being born commends us to our parents and the immortal gods and the fatherland, because we are simultaneously taken up into the light and increased through the divine spirit within us and enrolled in a fixed place of citizenship and liberty. That scoundrel has washed away the name, rites, memory, and family that belonged to his parents by adopting the name "Fonteius." When it comes to the gods, he has overturned with a crime that cannot be expiated their sacred fires, their thrones, their tables, their hidden inner hearths, and the secret rites that are not only not to be seen by men but not even to be spoken of; and he has also set aflame the temple of the very goddesses whose assistance is used for other fires. 58 What should I say about his fatherland? First, he used violence, weapons, and threats to drive from the city and from all the safeguards of this fatherland that man whom you repeatedly deemed the "the fatherland's savior"; then, after turning out this partner of the senate (that's what I've always said; Clodius was accustomed to speak of the senate's "leader"), he overturned the senate itself, the head of public safety and order, with violence, slaughter, and flames. He repealed two laws that were most beneficial to the republic, the *leges Aelia* and *Fufia*, eliminated the censorship, removed the tribunician veto, destroyed the auspices, armed the consuls, his partners in crime, with the treasury, provinces, and an army, sold royal rights that already existed and created those that did not, drove Pompey into his home with the sword, overturned monuments of generals, destroyed the homes of his enemies, and wrote his own name on monuments that belong to you. Countless are the crimes that he has committed against his fatherland. What else can I say? He committed crimes against

individual citizens (murdering them), allies (plundering them), generals (betraying them), and armies (tampering with them). 59 And what else? How great are the crimes that he committed against himself and his family! Did anyone ever show less mercy to an enemy camp than he has to every single part of his body? Was any ship in a public thoroughfare ever ridden less frequently by everyone than he was in his youth? What playboy ever rolled around with whores as freely as this man has with his sisters? And lastly, what kind of enormous Charybdis could poets describe in their fictions that could suck up whirlpools of the same size as the loot that Clodius has drained from the Byzantines and King Brogitarus? Or what kind of a Scylla, with dogs projecting out as famished as Clodius's henchmen—Gellius, Cloelius, Titius, and their ilk—as you watch him chomping away at the very *rostra*?

60 And so, give your attention to the last part of the haruspical response, that THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC NOT BE SUBVERTED. Even if we should prop up this city of ours on every side after it has already toppled, it will still just barely stay together, resting on all our shoulders. Once upon a time this state was so stable and strong that it could endure the negligence of the senate and even the unjust actions of its citizens. It can no longer. There is no treasury; those who have collected the taxes make no profit from them; the authority of our leaders has come to an end; harmony among the orders has been ripped apart; the courts have perished; the ballots, filled out in advance, are controlled by a few; the assistance of the elite will no longer be at our beck and call; as for the citizen who, for the sake of the country's well-being, would stand up to public indignation, in vain will you all long for him in the future.

61 As a result, we have the ability to preserve the current system—in whatever condition it is now—only through mutual harmony. We must not even have the hope of being in a better situation so long as that man remains unpunished. But for us to be in a worse position there is only one step down from here: that of annihilation or slavery. The immortal gods warn us not to be beaten down because human counsel has long since failed.

And so, members of the senate, I would not have undertaken such a melancholic and stern speech—not because I did not possess the duty and ability to adopt this character and play this part, inasmuch as the Roman people have given me political offices and you have given me so many honors. Still, with everyone else saying nothing I could easily have remained silent. And yet my entire speech is not to be credited to my authority, but to public religious sentiment. The majority of the words have perhaps been my own, but the judgments belong entirely to the *haruspices*. Either it was inappropriate to refer to them the portents that had been announced or it is necessary that we be deeply moved by their responses. 62 Accordingly, if we have often been disturbed by all these other signs that are more common and less serious, will not the very voice of the immortal gods rouse up the minds of us all? Do not think that what

you often see happening in plays could possibly occur—no god will slip down from the sky to approach a human gathering, spend time on earth, and converse with people. Recall the type of sound that the Latinienses have reported and recall also what has not yet been brought before our body: there are reports that at almost the same time a horrible shaking of the earth, along with so many fearful events, took place at Potentia in the *ager Picenus*. These very same things that I foresee as a threat all of you will soon be dreading. 63 For this must be considered the voice of the immortal gods—almost their speech—when the world itself, the fields and lands, shake all over with a strange tremor, portending something through an unusual and extraordinary sound. In this instance it is we who must prepare for expiations and public prayer, just as we are warned. But prayers are easy in the presence of those gods who willingly show us the way to safety; our own anger and disagreements, felt among ourselves, must be reconciled by us.